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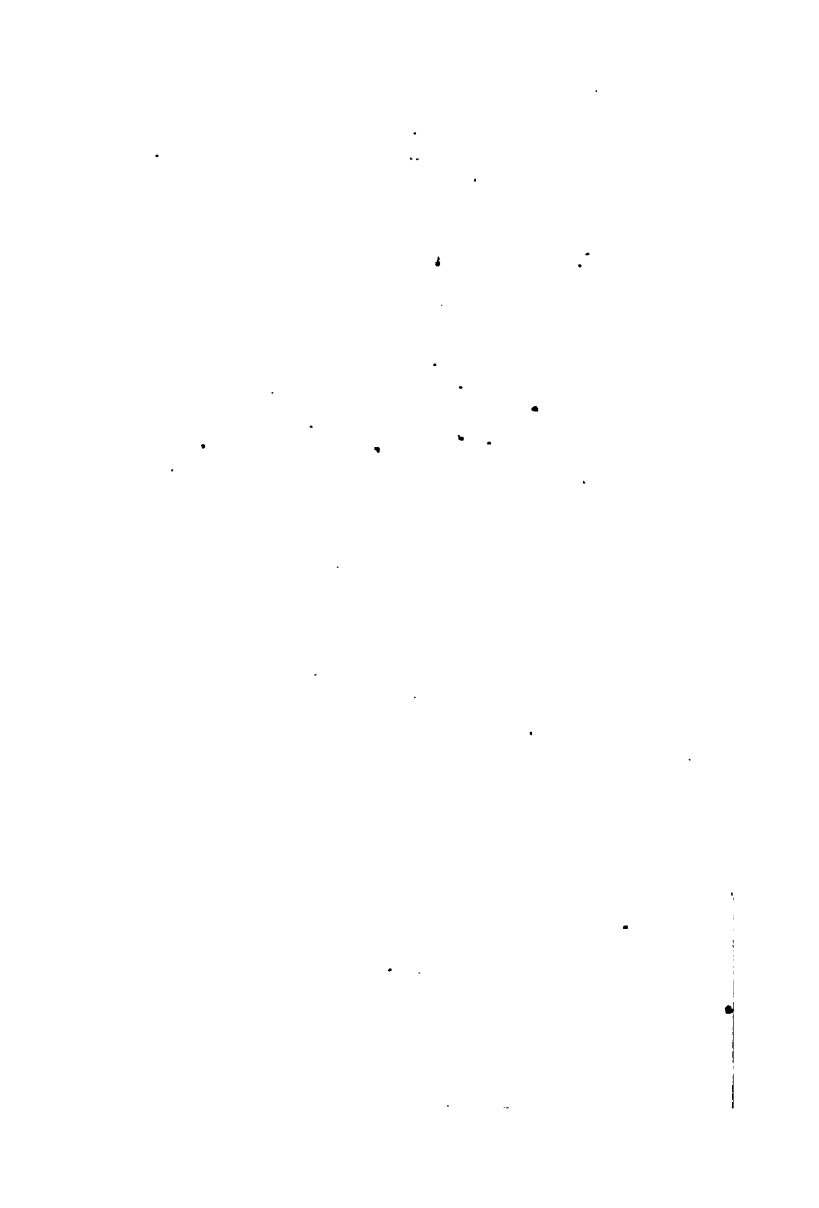
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THE
ATHANASIAN CREED

REV. T. KING.







FIVE LECTURES
ON
THE ATHANASIAN CREED,

PREACHED DURING LENT, 1839,
AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF CRANBROOK, KENT.

BY THE LATE
REV. THOMAS KING,
VICAR OF LINTON.

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PREFACE.

THESE Lectures were preached in the Parish Church at Cranbrook, by the late Rev. Thomas King, at that time Incumbent of the District Church at Sissinghurst, in the same parish.

The false doctrines to which they refer were, unhappily, prevalent in that neighbourhood, and it was the wish of the Rev. James Boys that a series of discourses on the subject should be delivered by his valued friend and neighbour. Mr. King willingly undertook the duty, and treated the difficult questions involved so

ably and so practically that considerable impression was made at the time, and it is trusted that the minds of many were established in the truth as it is in Jesus. Even opponents were constrained to own the ability and the faithful love with which the venerable minister of Christ contended earnestly for what he knew to be the faith once delivered to the saints.

It is felt that the publication of these Lectures may be useful to many, and they are now committed to the press with the hope and prayer that God the Holy Spirit may make them instrumental in the blessed work of glorifying the Lord Jesus, the Eternal Son of the Father.

The faithful servant of God, who, being dead, yet speaketh in these pages,

had but this one supreme desire in composing these Lectures, and the Editor humbly prays that such may be the result of their publication.

Many interesting particulars might be added respecting the esteemed Author, but are omitted lest they should be considered unsuitable for a mere preface. It may, however, be stated that the Rev. Thomas King was presented by the late Earl Cornwallis to the living of Linton, Kent, in the year 1849, where, after a long and painful illness, borne with Christian patience, he died November 12, 1855.

PREFATORY NOTE.

As there may be some readers of these Lectures who may wish for an historical account of the Creed itself, the following Note is added by the Editor:—

The doctrines of Arius, which were first proposed at Alexandria, found a native of the same city to oppose them; and this was Athanasius. At the Council of Nice, in Bithynia, he was a deacon attending on the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the great maintainer of the Catholic doctrine against the novelties of Arius. He soon after was elected Patriarch of Alexandria himself.

His writings are come down to our

times, and in them we find all the doctrines, and most of the identical expressions, which are now in the Creed that bears his name; but the Creed itself is generally allowed by the learned not to be of his composition.

The Creed, as it now stands in our Liturgy, is supposed to have been framed from the writings of Athanasius, before the sixth century. (Mant on the Prayer-book.)

For a full account of Arius and his heresy, see Milner's "Church History."

LECTURE I.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."—1 Tim. iii. 9.

It is my intention to take the Athanasian Creed for the subject of the Lectures which are to be delivered here during the present season of Lent; and I trust, by the Divine assistance, to be enabled to offer to your consideration such a view and explanation of its contents as shall satisfy every sincere believer in the truth of God's Word that it is in perfect agreement with the declarations of Scripture; that the common charge brought against it of containing uncharitable denunciations is unfounded; and that there is nothing presumptuous in the manner in which it speaks of the holy mysteries of which it treats.

, I shall confine my observations this even-

ing to the two first sentences of the Creed, which are these:—

“Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”

This passage, together with that other at the close of the Creed, I am aware, have proved to many not only startling, but offensive, yea, even many who sincerely and substantially hold the doctrines which the Creed contains, have been unwilling to admit what they are pleased to term the strong representation which these two passages give. There may be probably some such around me now. Of them and of all others I have to request a patient and dispassionate hearing.

I would wish the whole to be tried by the Word of God, and by that let it stand or fall. My own firm persuasion and belief is, that it is a truly scriptural exposition of the grand and leading doctrines of the Gospel, of that Gospel of salvation in which, in order to any

one being a partaker of its blessings, there must be undoubting faith.

The Creed opens by pre-supposing a desire for salvation :—" Whosoever will be saved." To persons who entertain no concern respecting the salvation of their souls, but who are content to live like the animals which have no understanding ; whose whole interest and care are occupied in the affairs and enjoyments of time, and to whom the thought of an eternal world is an unwelcome intruder whenever it forces itself upon their minds ; it will, of course, be matter of indifference what they believe, or, perhaps, whether they believe anything at all. But in whatever breast the anxious thought has been raised, " What will become of me after death ? " there, we may fairly presume—indeed, it seems a necessary and certain consequence of such anxiety—will the all-important inquiry be instituted, " What shall I do to be saved ? " Yes, every mind that has been led seriously to reflect on the certainty of a termination of everything here, either sooner or later, and to meditate on another state of existence,

that has been brought to the knowledge and conviction that the souls of all men will one day stand before the awful tribunal of God, cannot fail to be desirous to know how souls, fallen and corrupted by sin, may stand and appear before a holy God their Judge, and yet escape the condemnation and penalty due to them for sin. The Creed pre-supposes this, and therefore says, "Whosoever will, or is desirous to be saved ;" and then proceeds to state the grounds on which such salvation is to be looked for, by saying, "Before all things, it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith."

The Creed does not set out by telling us that our salvation is to be procured by our performance of good works, by the discharge of the various duties we owe to God, to man, and to ourselves. It does not sanction in the remotest degree that too generally prevailing notion in a self-righteous world, that, provided we lead moral and respectable lives, all will be well with us. No, it thrusts all this on one side, not, indeed, rejecting or denying the necessity of good works and a holy life,

as I shall have occasion to show at the close of these lectures, but only refusing them that place which belongs to faith. You observe it says, in the most unqualified terms, "Before all things," &c. ; thereby giving the absolute and entire precedence to faith.

Let us, then, proceed to inquire whether the Creed, in making this demand upon us, is clearly and fully supported by holy Scripture. Every reader of the Bible cannot but know the great stress and importance which are throughout its pages ascribed to faith. We find Jude (ver. 3) thus speaking :— "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." And he assigns as a reason for pressing this upon them, because there were certain men crept in unawares, ungodly men, denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. He urged upon them a lively zeal for the truth of the Gospel, inasmuch as he knew and regarded the salvation of their

souls to be inseparably connected with a clear reception and a firm retention of that truth. He knew that truth to be the only foundation of their hope of life eternal; and, therefore, as an observant watchman and a faithful minister, warns and exhorts them. And still farther to strengthen and give force to his warnings and exhortations on the subject of faith, he brings to their remembrance "how the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." (Ver. 5.)

Of the absolute necessity of faith as the great preliminary to salvation, and to everything connected with it, we have evidence from what St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews (ch. xi., ver. 6), "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And in another place he urges them "to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering." (Heb. x. 23.)

These few quotations from Scripture will, I trust, suffice to prove that the Creed sets

out with a true and sound doctrine, when it urges upon all who desire salvation to seek it by faith. Very numerous additional passages to the same effect might easily be adduced.

Now faith is an unreserved reception of the whole Word of God as true. Its character is this. It does not, in the mistaken spirit of a Nicodemus, propose to itself the question, "How can these things be?" It does not say with Thomas, the doubting apostle of our Lord, "Unless I see I will not believe." It does not ask for miraculous and extraordinary manifestations as evidence of the truths it is required to receive and embrace; but it receives with meekness the engrafted Word, and searches, as the Bereans did, the Scriptures to see, not how, but whether such and such things be revealed and declared or not. It builds upon Scripture, knowing it to be given by inspiration of God, and, with humble submission to the Divine teaching, yields a simple and sincere assent to all which God has seen good to communicate. To do this is at once safe, and a ground of solid and established peace to the

soul. And I would desire to press most earnestly upon every one to cultivate and cherish, with all diligence and prayer, this humble and holy affiance upon the whole of God's revealed truth. Let the caution which the apostle gave (Heb. iii. 12) be listened to with devout attention by all: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

But a common objection continues to be raised. Am I required, say some, to believe doctrines which I do not and cannot understand? Is it required of me to give my assent to certain statements as truths, in which, to my apprehension, there even seems to be something like impossibility or contradiction? Can I be blamed for not believing what I do not comprehend? These and similar questions have long been, and still are, current in the world, and, it is to be feared, too often are only excuses framed from motives which will not bear exposure; there is an unwillingness to believe, or an attempt to get rid of the persuasion of a

truth, because, with the reception of that truth, stand connected other things which are opposed to the unrenewed mind. That the fault of unbelief is with man is clear from this, that our Lord brings it as a charge of reproach and condemnation upon some in his day that they did not believe, and, upon two or three occasions, specifies the causes which led to their unbelief, viz., their worldly mindedness and vainglory. It will, however, be worth while to investigate and endeavour to reply to these objections so commonly made. For any one to say, it surely cannot be required of men to believe things which are above their comprehension, what is it but, in fact, to impugn the equity and justice of God who makes this requisition of us? And, whilst it is a calling in question the righteousness of God, it is at the same time a positive act of disobedience to Him. In proof of this let us attend to 1 John iii. 23 : "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." To believe, therefore, stands exhibited to us in the light and cha-

racter of a commandment, and such it unquestionably is. To decline, therefore, on any ground to give our believing assent to any revealed truth can only be construed into disobedience. That I am not straining a point will be seen by referring to what Paul says (Rom. i. 5), when he uses the expression, "obedience to the faith." And again (ch. xv., ver. 18), when he says that his preaching was for the purpose of making the Gentiles obedient. And again (ch. xvi., ver. 26), in still stronger terms, "The revelation of the mystery is now made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." And in the Acts (vi. 7), it is said, "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

This view of the subject is not so seriously regarded, nor so generally taken, as it ought to be. Hence we sometimes find persons, themselves sound and orthodox in their creed, too ready, under a mistaken liberality and charity, to make undue allowances for others,

and offering excuses for their erroneous opinions. But would they act thus inconsistently if they regarded as they ought to do the call to belief in the Catholic faith, as set forth in the Scriptures, in the light of a solemn commandment? Could they contemplate an unsound faith as a matter of indifference, and in nowise perilous to the individual who held the corrupt doctrine, if they considered that to disobey a commandment is to subject him who disobeys it to the condemnation of Him who enacts that commandment? It could not be. We have been too long, my friends, beguiled and deluded by a specious and false charity in the professing Christian world, and it becomes us, for the cure of error, as far as in us lieth, and for the prevention of its extension, so God bless our efforts to this end, to speak out boldly and faithfully. And we do openly and unreservedly deliver our opinion that the belief of the Catholic faith, by which is meant the faith ever and universally held by the true Church of Christ in all ages and in all countries, is essential to our salvation; and we

think we have sufficiently proved it to be so by exhibiting it, as Scripture doth, in the light of a commandment, and by adducing those Scriptures which assert it to be such.

I will now endeavour to show the unreasonableness, and indeed inconsistency, of any one declining to believe a doctrine because of there being an incomprehensible mystery involved in it. Few persons are aware, when they allow their minds to be under the rule of such a principle, to what an awful extent their principle, if carried out to its legitimate length, would hurry them. It goes at once to the denial of a God of eternal existence. For, if I am only required to believe what the powers of my mind are capable of thoroughly understanding, I need not believe that there is a God at all; for it is most certain I cannot comprehend God. His essence is and must necessarily be utterly unknown to me, for I am finite and He is infinite. His Word tells me God is a Spirit; but is my understanding at all helped to know and comprehend his spiritual existence as a Being without body, parts, or pas-

sions? He is said to be from everlasting to everlasting; but can any mind stretch its grasp through the past to the coming eternity, so to speak, and conceive of a Being who never had beginning, can have no end, and who is of infinite power and wisdom,—the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible? No! the very first attempt is overwhelming, and sinks my understanding into confusion, and I can only exclaim, “Who, by searching, can find out the Almighty to perfection?” (Job xi. 7.) That there is such a Being is indisputable; everything around us incontestibly proves that there must be a God so characterized. It must be understood, as Paul argues, “by the things which are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.” (Rom. i. 20.)

Do we reject, then, the belief of a God because we are utterly unable to comprehend by our finite minds His nature, essence, eternity, and infinite power? Far from it. We are convinced by common sense that God must be eternal, that He cannot be otherwise, and, though we cannot explore

His eternity, we assent to it as a necessary part of his being,—that is, we believe it to be so. Thus, you see, by this instance the principle is at once and completely destroyed, that we can only believe what we understand. In fact, were it so, there would be an end of faith at once, for there would be no occasion for it. For, what is faith? The apostle tells us, “it is the evidence of things not seen.”

The productions of the natural world, such as the springing up and growth of herbs, plants, and trees, and the reproduction of their own kinds, are things which meet our outward senses daily; we know that such things take place, but the manner in which all is brought about we do not understand. Naturalists speak of secondary causes operating in and upon them, but these secondary causes require a primary cause to give them their existence, continuance, and progress; and here they must stop, and resolve all into the creative, sustaining, and reproducing power of the Almighty, even of Him whose ways are unsearchable. So that it is

plain there are many things which we must believe from the evidence of their truth being, if I may so speak, irresistibly forced upon our minds and senses, and from which we cannot escape, and which, nevertheless, is of such a kind as admits not of our comprehension.

There have been those who have been bold and rash enough to affirm that, where mystery begins, there religion ends; that, whenever anything is presented to the mind for its reception which reason is insufficient to explore and understand, then the obligation to receive it ceases. This is most absurd; for it stands to reason that religion, which we will now only speak of as implying the knowledge of God, must abound in mysteries,—in things past our finding out,—inasmuch as it treats of Him who is unsearchable, &c. St. Paul does not hesitate to affirm this, for, writing to Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 16), he expressly says, “Great is the mystery of godliness.”

Having thus far endeavoured to prove,

first, the correctness of the Creed in requiring of us before all things, in order to salvation, to hold the Catholic faith, and shown that it is scriptural; and, secondly, that the demand of our faith in things beyond our comprehension is by no means an unreasonable demand; I proceed to the consideration of the second paragraph of the Creed, in which it is affirmed,—“Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”

I remark, first, upon the expressions, “whole and undefiled.” These were evidently adopted and introduced into the Creed for the important purpose of reminding the members of Christian Churches that nothing must be taken away from Christian doctrines as if it were unessential to faith; it must be whole and entire, and that no intermixture of human invention may be introduced, as if the scriptural statements were defective and needed further additions. The justness and soundness of this caution will be well seen when we come in our future lectures to

discuss and prove by Scripture some of the mysteries of our holy religion of which the Creed elaborately treats.

Having premised thus much on these two words, I come now to that which I know to have been a stumbling-block to many, but surely without reason. The words so objectionable to some are these: "Without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." It has been said by many, these words are presumptuous and uncharitable, that it is taking upon one to pronounce upon the eternal state of another in a most unjustifiable manner. How easy it is to find fault without consideration, and to use hard terms without any warrant for employing them.

It would, I admit, be presumptuous and uncharitable to say as much if the composer of the Creed had said these things of his own mind, and without the sanction of Scripture. Now, admitting the statements in the following part of the Creed to be true,—which it will be my business to show on another occasion,—if the Word of God makes the same denunciations which the Creed does, the

Creed is then supported by the Word of God, and, being so, there cannot be anything presumptuous or uncharitable in what it asserts. To the proof, then, from the Word of God.

When our Lord gave his last commission to his apostles, it was in these words:—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

Words cannot speak plainer on the saving nature of faith, and on the destructive character of unbelief. And this is not by any means a solitary passage to this effect. It is in many places either expressly affirmed, or must necessarily be implied and inferred from them. As, for instance (John iii. 18), when our Lord said, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And so to a similar effect (John viii. 24),—"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." And when our

Lord says, "He that believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 26), the converse must necessarily be true, that he who believeth not will be subjected to eternal death.

The Creed, then, asserts nothing more than what the Word of God asserts, that believers shall be saved, and unbelievers lost.

What that faith is which the Bible and this Creed require in order to salvation is to be inquired into more minutely as we proceed with the subject at another time.

I would now, in concluding my address to you this evening, offer a few short remarks connected with what I have been advancing, and also as bearing upon what I shall have to offer to your consideration in treating of the subsequent parts of the Creed. And first, it is to be noted that there is a wide difference between seeing that the Bible contains the declaration of a mystery and our comprehending the nature of that mystery. God does not require of us to comprehend that which is above our faculties to understand. For of this we may be assured, had the all-righteous God required this at our hands, He

would have bestowed the necessary faculties and powers of mind for it. But He has not done this, and therefore it makes no part of his demands upon us. Belief, or faith, is a very different exercise of the mind; it is taking the declarations contained in God's Word to be true—absolutely true, and receiving and confessing them to be so. It is the act of an humble and gracious mind which presumes not to set up its own wisdom in opposition to the wisdom of God, and, where any gainsaying appears, meekly says, "Let God be true." (Rom. iii. 4.) There is a necessary impossibility in a finite creature comprehending the infinite God and mysteries connected with His essence and mode of existence. But there is no necessary impossibility in any one believing as true what is stated of God by God himself.

Another remark I would offer is in regard to the expressions, "charitable and uncharitable." Great mistakes are committed by numbers in the using of these terms. You will hear persons saying that it is uncharitable to pronounce against certain opinions which

others may hold, and that we have no right to condemn them for holding the sentiments they do. But I would beg to ask, which is the more charitable or uncharitable line of conduct, when from Scripture we conscientiously believe any one to be in fatal error, to point out to him his error, and warn him in due time of its perilous consequences, or to leave his error unnoticed and unproved, and thereby become an accessory to his soul's ruin? Oh! that is a false charity indeed which would withhold a truth—an important truth—of God's Word because it might be unpalatable and offensive to some. Give it its proper name, and it is cruelty—it is hatred. There is a remarkable passage to this effect (Lev. xix. 17):—"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Some have brought forward, in a most inappropriate manner, the words of our Lord, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned;" but these words were spoken in order to caution his followers against harsh

and probably unfounded censures of the motives and actions of others, but do not in the remotest degree relate to plain and faithful speaking of those truths with which a man's everlasting welfare is intimately connected.

“ Lastly, for a more immediately practical purpose, let me press upon you two things:—

Diligently read and search the Scriptures. Let no day pass without your drinking at those fountains of living waters.

The Scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

And, in order that they may have this blessed effect upon you, read them with humble and fervent prayer to the Holy Spirit for His heavenly teaching, that He may open the Scriptures to your minds, and your minds and hearts to them; for He alone can guide you into all truth.

LECTURE II.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."—1 Tim. iii. 9.

THE portion of the Athanasian Creed on which I proceed to lecture this evening will commence with the words, "And the Catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;" and conclude with the passage containing these words, "So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there be three Gods or three Lords."

On approaching this deeply mysterious subject, it will become us to be entirely free from a vain and unholy curiosity, and from every expectation of being able to attain unto the comprehension of it in the same way that God has given us powers, by means of the faculty of reason, to comprehend a variety of

subjects, in themselves intricate and difficult, but which, nevertheless, patient and persevering investigation and study enable numbers to explore and understand.

In my address to you, therefore, I shall be guided entirely by scriptural statement, and shall make no attempt to give an explanation of the nature of the mystery of the Godhead as declared in the Creed. And here I wish to remove a very common, but a very mistaken impression, concerning the Creed. It has been brought as a charge against it, and that not by the opponents of the doctrines which it contains, but by many who believe in them, that, as they conceive, there is a presumptuous attempt to define and explain the manner in which the Trinity subsists. There is nothing of the kind, as anyone may see who will carefully look through the whole composition; from beginning to end it is simply a declaration and statement of certain truths contained in the revelation of God; and all that variety of expression which is employed in speaking of the Three Persons constituting the one God is solely for the

purpose, not, I repeat, of endeavouring to explain how the Trinity subsists, but to show that, in everything belonging to essential Deity, all the Three Persons equally and eternally participate. With this caution I proceed to my immediate subject.

The first point which shall occupy our attention is the Unity of the Godhead. There is but one God. This is the foundation of all true religion. It is the character of all false religion to multiply gods. Against such the Everlasting Jehovah has invariably, and in the most forcible terms, protested, and uttered the most awful threatenings. He giveth not of his glory to another. Were there more than one God (but the very supposition is, in fact, an absurdity and contradiction), the government of the immense universe would be a divided sovereignty; and all that we are taught to conceive, and must necessarily conceive, as belonging to the absolute perfection of Deity—namely, unity and uncontrollable independency of Almighty power—could not be entertained under the supposition of there being more than one

God. Nor is there. The Scriptures of truth set this before us again and again in the plainest terms. Jehovah himself, in the first of those Ten Commandments which He gave to his servant Moses, says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." We have the words, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4); "There is none other God but one." (1 Cor. viii. 4.) So (Gal. iii. 20) "God is one;" and, once more (1 Tim. ii. 5), "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." And when Satan, in his temptation of our Lord, proposed to Him to fall down and worship him, the reply of Christ evidently sets forth the oneness of the Godhead. He says, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. iv. 10.)

With this reply of Christ the Creed completely agrees, when it says, "The Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God."

It might be supposed that there was no occasion to make the discussion and proof of the oneness of the Godhead any part of my

subject, as that is a point upon which all are agreed. But it was necessary, both for pursuing the course which has been taken in this Creed, and also for preventing any misconception of expressions hereafter to be used, that it should at once be distinctly affirmed that there is but one God. For there are those who impute to the statements of this Creed that, whilst it affects to maintain that there is but one God, it does, in fact, inculcate the existence of three Gods. And it is certain that, in a very early age of the Church, there did exist a most unscriptural and pernicious heresy. There were some who, seeing most clearly from the Word of God that Christ was spoken of as Divine, and that the Holy Ghost was spoken of in a similar manner, fell into the error of asserting that there were three separate Divine substances, or, in other words, that there were three Gods, losing sight of that which Scripture universally teaches, and which, among many passages, is announced in a most marked manner: "I am He, and there is no God with me." (Deut. xxxii. 39.)

But whilst unquestionably there is, and can only be, one God, it is equally true that in the Godhead there are three persons, thus distinguished—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That there are three persons spoken of in Scripture in a most remarkable manner is, one would think, open to the observation of every one who reads the Bible. I use the term “remarkable,” because, whilst we read of angels being commissioned by God on a variety of occasions on errands to mankind, we never find any one of them spoken of as possessing, or claiming, or appearing to exercise, any independent power or authority. They are simply “ministering spirits.” (Heb. i. 14.) But when we read of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, we continually meet with declarations respecting them, attributing to them a dignity, a power, an authority, which we nowhere see ascribed to angels; and we are therefore brought to the necessity of distinguishing them entirely from that order of beings; and there is a passage relative to Christ (Heb. ii. 16) which at once establishes the point that Christ was a being

wholly distinct from the order of angels: "Verily, He took not on Him the nature of angels; but he took on Him the seed of Abraham,"—which passage, I would also remark by the way, gives decisive proof of the pre-existent state of Christ; for had He not been pre-existent, it would have been absurd to say that He had taken anything, any form, any nature at all; for that which is not existent cannot take anything—it is not there to take it. But of this I shall make further use hereafter.

I would now direct your attention to the circumstance of there being three persons remarkably spoken of both unitedly and separately. Let us first contemplate them as spoken of unitedly. And here, as a prelude to other passages which will have to be adduced, the baptism of our Lord cannot fail to strike our attention. He is the subject of the baptism, the Spirit of God descends upon Him, and a voice from heaven, that of the Father, proclaims Him as his beloved Son. (Matt. iii. 17.) Here are evidently distinctions of three persons.

If we look to the commission which our Lord gave to His apostles before his departure, we cannot but allow, to say the least, that there is something extraordinary, except upon the supposition of all the three persons being Divine, that Christ should give such a charge as this—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In this holy sacrament, the introductory rite into the visible Church of Christ, which must be regarded in a most solemn light, Christ unites His own name and that of the Holy Ghost with that of the Father, teaching us thereby that, in order to the validity of baptism, it is essential that it should always be so administered; and consequently that if it is to be so administered, there are three persons to be always recognised in its form, and those three equally honoured; for whilst there is a distinction of persons, there is not the least intimation given of a distinction of honour.

I bring before you the well-known benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Here, again, three persons are comprehended, and in such a way that if any one had been disposed, from the Father being first mentioned in the form of baptism, to infer an inequality in the persons, such a notion must be set aside by this passage, where the grace of Christ, in the expression of the benediction, stands before the love of God.

Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 18), brings the three persons together in such a manner as evidently shows us that he regarded the doctrine as constituting the great groundwork of the Gospel dispensation. His words are these:—"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;" and (ver. 22):—"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The Apostle says (1 Cor. xii. 4—6):—"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of administration, but the same Lord; there are diversities of operations, but it is the same

God which worketh all in all." "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and show it unto you." (John xvi. 15.)

The exhortation of Jude shall close my quotations from Scripture on this point:—"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Now, in this and in one or two other passages there is, if I may so speak, an undesignedness of manner in the expression, clearly showing that the doctrine of three persons being engaged in the covenant of man's salvation was an accepted and well-known doctrine in the Church.

Having thus spoken of the three persons unitedly, I proceed to speak of them separately; and this for the immediate purpose of showing you that, according to the expression in the Creed, each person is by himself God and Lord.

Now, in regard to Christ, observe how John speaks of Him in the opening of his

Gospel:—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and the fourteenth verse at once instructs us what the meaning of the expression, "Word," is:—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

When Christ says (John v. 23) that the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and assigns as a reason "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and adds, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him," we must of necessity regard Christ as claiming equal honour with the Father in all respects, and therefore as being very God of very God; for the words are explicit, "Even as they honour the Father."

And that this honour which He claimed on this occasion was ever His, appears from what He said (John xvii. 5) in that sublime prayer He uttered:—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world

was." Here was glory enjoyed with the Father before his appearance upon earth, and so spoken of as clearly to denote a co-equality of glory.

You will remember Christ on one occasion said (John x. 30):—"I and my Father are one." The effect which this had upon the Jews is remarkable. They proceeded to stone Him, feeling that the words contained the necessary implication that He who spake to them claimed to be God. It is said, you know, that "in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9),—that He was before all things, and by Him all things consist,—that He is the head of all principality and power,—that He is God over all, blessed for evermore. That passage (Heb. i. 8), "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," is well worthy our most particular notice, for there is God the Father addressing his Son Jesus Christ as God; and it is quite impossible, without doing the utmost violence to plain language, to understand the passage

in any other sense than as intending most unequivocally to proclaim Christ as God. It is a quotation from Psalm xlv. 6 and 7.

I close this part with the memorable exclamation of Thomas. He had given way to a spirit of unbelief, but, convinced by the evidence condescendingly afforded him by our Lord, he makes confession of his conviction, and of the light in which he now contemplated our Lord, in these words:—"My Lord and my God!" And can we suppose that if, through astonishment, &c., he had fallen into the mistake of ascribing to Jesus that which belonged not to Him, Jesus would not have corrected so important a mistake? Would Jesus, who reproved his unbelief of His resurrection—his doubt of His being the identical Jesus who had suffered and died on the cross, have allowed His servant and apostle to remain in error on a point which, if it were not true, would have been an impious and blasphemous assertion? Oh, no. He who was the truth itself would never have allowed such an untruth—if untruth it had been—to go forth before the world. We

therefore necessarily conclude that, inasmuch as Christ did not reprove the words, those words were true, and that Christ is Lord and God.

I know it has been suggested by some adverse to the doctrine of our Lord's Divine nature that Thomas, overcome by surprise, uttered these words merely under the influence of astonishment, and by no means intended to convey by them a persuasion of his mind that Christ was God. Then he took God's name in vain ; and this, we cannot doubt, would have called for a reproof and condemnation from Christ. I will add only one more, and that from 1 John v. 20 :—
“ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

I now proceed to show that the Holy Ghost also is God. We have already seen, in noticing the baptism of Christ, that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the

Father and the Son; yet is He one with them in the Godhead.

The conception of the Virgin Mary gives proof of this. The angel first of all tells Mary that the child whom she was to bring forth should be called the Son of the Highest; and upon her asking how all this was to be, the angel replies, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." (Luke i. 32.) Whence it is clear, from the manner in which the mention of the Holy Ghost is introduced in connexion with the power of the Highest, that it is God who is intended.

When Ananias was guilty of lying, Peter said to him, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost? &c. Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God,"—in the very same sentence proclaiming his sin to be against the Holy Ghost and God; which words can admit of no other interpretation than that the Holy Ghost is God.

The Divine nature of the Holy Ghost is most evidently set forth in all those passages

where the apostles warn their fellow-Christians not to grieve Him, not to resist Him, not to quench Him, not to do despite to his grace. For, first of all, his personality in all these and similar passages is plainly set forth. And who, then, is the Being that is grieved, &c., but the Eternal God? If it be asked, Why is the Spirit mentioned, and not God? the answer is ready,—Because the Spirit having been given, according to the promise of Christ, to his Church, whatever offences were committed by any member of that Church were committed in opposition to his enlightening and sanctifying grace. And this brings to my mind that awful declaration of our Lord respecting the Holy Ghost, to which no adequate meaning can be given excepting by regarding the Holy Ghost as God. The words are these:—"Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." (Matt. xii. 32.) Here the Holy Ghost is at once set forth as a person; and

from the awful consequences which will ensue to all who speak against Him, we cannot account Him other than God.

When St. Paul asked the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16), nothing else can be inferred than that the Holy Spirit is God, from their being spoken of in the same manner. In the Acts (xiii. 2) we have it recorded that the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." With these passages I shall content myself, as undoubtedly proving the Holy Ghost to be a person, and a Divine person. And hereby the Creed is borne out in the expression, a "God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity," and in requiring that we should worship God as such; for if Deity belong to each, as worship belongs to God, each person is entitled to worship.

The Creed then proceeds :—"Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance." The meaning of which is, that,

whilst we acknowledge all the Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—we do not so acknowledge them as if they were three separate and distinct Gods—because that would make against the first great principle of true religion, namely, that there is but one God—but that, whilst we acknowledge the persons, we carefully maintain their unity in one Godhead.

The word substance proves a difficulty to many; and I am not going to attempt to remove the whole difficulty connected with the application and use of the term, though I regard it as a proper one, and the best suited of any that human language, weak and defective as it is, especially when it speaks of God, can supply. But I am certain the difficulty has been made vastly greater by most people understanding it in the sense of a material substance. Now, God is not matter, but Spirit. If the substance were material substance, in any modified sense in which it might be spoken of, then, indeed, unity would be destroyed, and we should have three, and not one God. But

it is not to be so understood ; for the reason assigned, that God is Spirit.

But here I pause ;—for, though I may in a measure say what material substance cannot be—both three and at the same time only one—I will not intrude into the Holy of Holies, and, with unhallowed and daring presumption, attempt to define and explain how one undivided substance or subsistence shall comprehend three distinct persons. Sufficient is it that the Scriptures teach that each of the persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—possess each whatever belongs to Deity, and yet, at the same time, equally teach us that there is but one God.

And shall my mind stagger with unbelief because I am not able to enter into this mystery ? Or shall I, with proud presumption, set myself to the useless task of endeavouring to ascertain and make out how it can be so ? Oh ! no. Let me do that which angels do—reverence and adore. Let not my imagination and high thoughts exalt themselves against God, but let all be brought into complete submission to his Word ; for

His Word is truth. Let this be the question ever with each of us, What saith the Scriptures? And if this be proposed in meekness and sincerity, God, by his Spirit, will enable each of us to rest in the quietness of faith; and though we may be sometimes tempted to wish to know with the understanding the nature of these mysteries, God will bring us back to the resting-place of faith, the holy exercise of which amounts to the fullest strength of conviction in every breast in which it prevails.

The truth, then, being established from Scripture that there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; and that the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, as the Creed states, there will be no difficulty, to any one who receives this doctrine, in admitting that the glory must be equal and the majesty co-eternal. Nor will it be requisite that I should go through, with explanation, the terms employed in the Creed, for the purpose of most distinctly declaring each person to be

by himself God and Lord—namely, the terms uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal, almighty—any further than to explain one, namely, incomprehensible, which, by the change which language is continually undergoing, is not now received generally in its right meaning.

Its commonly-received meaning is, that which cannot be understood; which, though it be perfectly true of God in many respects, is not what is intended here, which is, that which is not and cannot be confined by limits. All the other words employed are easily seen to belong essentially to God, and therefore by all those who hold the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity will be seen to be correctly applicable to each person of the Trinity.

Before I conclude my present lecture, I would call your attention to one circumstance which bears most decidedly, among many other considerations, on the truths I have been seeking to establish. Worship can only be offered to God. If, then, we find that Christ and the Eternal Spirit received worship, and that by Scripture we are justified in offering them worship, we must come to

the conclusion that Christ is God, and the Holy Spirit God.

In Hebrews i. 6 we have these words:—
“When He bringeth the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

In Revelation v.:—“All the hosts of heaven join in a song of praise and adoration to Him.”

In the various Epistles of St. Paul, when he prays for grace and peace to those to whom he wrote, he unites the name of Christ with that of God the Father.

Christ said of himself, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.)

The penitent thief. It is said (Luke xxiv. 52), the disciples worshipped Him; Stephen prayed to Him. (Acts vii. 59, 60.)

1 Corinthians i. 2:—“With all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Philippians ii. 9, 10:—“God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which

is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

In regard to the Holy Spirit, Jude calls upon the brethren to pray in the Holy Ghost.

Acts xiii. It is clear that the Holy Ghost was the person to whom the offering of prayer and the act of fasting were performed, when He called upon the apostles to separate Barnabas and Saul.

2 Thess. iii. 5 :—"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ ;" where the word Lord must be applied to the Holy Spirit.

The form of baptism and the Apostle's benediction also prove that worship is to be paid to the Holy Spirit, in conjunction with the Father and the Son.

I conclude by briefly remarking that this doctrine is practical, and connects with itself points of the utmost importance to our everlasting welfare.

If we reject the Divine nature of Christ,

how can He be our Saviour? God only can be such. Hear what God himself says:—"I am God, and none else: and beside me there is no Saviour." But Christ is our Saviour, and therefore must be Divine. Again, if we reject the Divine nature of the Holy Ghost, we reject the only means of our sanctification. He is the Sanctifier who cleanses the heart and renews the life. But this is the work of God; for He says, "I will give them a new heart and a right spirit." This the Holy Spirit does, and therefore is one with God.

This is the Gospel which has ever been preached, and which alone has at any time been found effectual in turning men from darkness to light, &c. Its whole tendency is to subdue sin, and to promote holiness of heart and life,—to give the most exalted views of the Divine nature, as abounding in wisdom, power, mercy, grace, and love.

I will only add, let none satisfy themselves with holding this orthodox Creed merely with the mind; but let it be a truth inscribed on

the heart,—let it be so holden by a true and lively faith as to bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Amen.

LECTURE III.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."—1 Tim. iii. 9.

It may be requisite to preface the lecture I am to deliver this evening by requesting you to bear closely in mind the principle with which I set out upon entering on the discussion of this Creed—namely, that we are to judge of it by Scripture, and, if we find it supported by what the Word of God declares, to receive it by faith, however unable we may be to explore and fathom the deep mysteries it contains.

In that part of it which is to engage our present attention, an humble submission of our reason and understanding will be essentially necessary as we go on with our con-

sideration of it. May that humble and holy submission be imparted to us from above !

Our last lecture concluded with the passage, "So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there be three Gods or three Lords." The present will commence with the words which immediately follow, "The Father is made of none ;" and will close with "He, therefore, that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity."

"The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten."

This proposition ought to be self-evident to every mind. The contrary supposition involves the completest absurdity. Yet there have been those who, puffed up by their vain imaginations, and led away by the pride of an unhallowed reason, have maintained and uttered opinions at once of the most foolish and impious kind respecting this point.

The eternal being of God, because it was too much for a creature of a finite mind to comprehend, has been disputed ; and the ridiculous and blasphemous notion has been adopted by some philosophers, falsely so

called, that that power which made, upholds, and preserves all things in the universe with such wisdom of contrivance, such might of creative energy, and such infinitude of goodness, had its beginning—came necessarily forth out of what they were unable to define, but chose to say was contained in the things which were diffused through the universe. Instead of going at once to that which is the simplest of all conceptions—a Being without beginning, and therefore necessarily such a Being as could and did produce by actual creation all that exists throughout space—they had recourse to accident, to chance, to a something in matter, (whereas there was no matter till the Eternal Father created it,) which, by an energy of its own, gave combination to the production of Omnipotence. Thus has the foolish heart of some been darkened. “Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.” (Job xi. 12.)

The very belief of the eternity of God is forced upon us by this consideration, that if He, whom we term and receive as God,

came—it matters not how, nor whence—from anything previously existing, then that which existed previously to Him was, in fact, the author of his being—was his Creator.

Now, see to what this leads; to the necessity of finding a something—not to say a power—which produced that which produced God; so that there is an endlessness of investigation and reasoning, without any the least satisfaction or clearing up of difficulties being obtained. How much more simple to admit at once a Being who never had beginning. I say not, that simple and obvious as this truth is, that its simplicity is of that kind that our contracted and bounded understandings can grasp it in its unlimited dimensions; but its simplicity is this—it needs nothing else to help it out—it can and does stand firmly by itself.

In the very nature and reason of things, therefore, the Creed speaks well when it says, “The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.”

But let us go to the inspired volume, and see what it declares. Psalm xc. 2. Moses

says of God:—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Mark in what sublime terms Isaiah speaks:—"The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. lvii. 15); and (Isa. xl. 26), "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by their names by the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power."

Moses, when encouraging the people, says (Deut. xxxiii. 27):—"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." St. Paul (Romans i. 20) brings it as an argument against the heathen that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;" and (Hebrews i. 10):—"And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands."

From all which we conclude that He who made all things could not himself be made, there being none to form Him; that, being before all creation, He is himself not created; that, since by Him all things were produced, He is unbegotten.

May this view of the Eternal Father press down for ever every proud and aspiring thought of carnal reason, make us see that we are as nothing, and fill us with devout and holy adoration!

The next point brought before us is, "The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten."

There are two terms employed here which have a distinctive meaning, and which must be defined—the terms *made* and *created*.

The term "made" implies something which has been formed out of materials previously existing—as, for instance, Adam was made out of the dust of the ground, the dust of the ground being matter already and previously existing. The term "created" implies something brought into existence at a certain time, which, before that time, had no exist-

ence—as when it is said, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;” that is, He gave being where before there was not being; He out of nothing produced something—namely, the heavens and the earth. And here I cannot refrain from making a short digression, which, though not immediately connected with the point before us, has a strong bearing upon that on which I have laid so much stress—the necessity of bowing down our minds with submissive belief where we cannot fathom and explore.

Who can comprehend the fact of God’s creative power? And how very frequently, and perhaps generally, have persons supposed that God only gave shape and quality and consistency and proportion and properties, and so on, to matter which was already and had always been existing. But reflect a moment. If it were so, then matter itself would be eternal, and would have one of the properties of a Divine nature. But, inconceivable as it may be to us, it is otherwise. Everything had a beginning of existence save Jehovah, the everlasting God. Oh! how

blessed and delightful is it to rest with holy faith on this indubitable truth, and, resting on it, to cast our eyes upwards—to direct our eyes around us—to examine into all things with holy inquiry, and then, as we see the wonders of all things and in all things, to break forth in the Divine thoughts of the Psalmist (Ps. xix. 1):—"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

But to return from this. Christ was not made. In other words, Christ was not formed of something existing before Him; for, if He had been, then those words could not be true which are written respecting Him. John i. 4: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Nor, again, Colossians i. 16: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." According to these

Scriptures, then, any one may perceive that Christ could not have been made, for He made all things. He was not a separation from the spiritual essence of the Father, neither was He created. That is to say, He was not produced out of nothing; He was not called into existence at a certain point, so to speak, in eternity, having previously had no existence, no subsistence, till He then for the first time came into existence, made his appearance in the infinite void of space; which must be the idea if we suppose Christ to have been a created being.

Now the angels were created beings. There was a point in eternity when they were not; and these very angels were created by Christ, as we have already seen. (Col. i. 16.) And in what relation they stood to Christ, and Christ to them, is clearly set forth by its being said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." (Heb. i. 6.) For compare with this what is said in another place, "He who built or created all things is God" (Heb. iii. 4), and we must come to the conclusion that Christ is God, and therefore,

of consequence, not a created existence. For to suppose that involves a most awful absurdity. It is supposing that Jehovah the Father created another God, to unite with Himself in power, rule, creation, and so on. But to such a being there would be wanting that which is the first and very essential property of a truly divine nature,—an eternal existence. This could not be the property of a being created at a certain time. Hence the eternal subsistence of the Son is proved by Scripture beyond dispute, and He is not created.

But the Creed states, "*but begotten.*" I first remark, it is not impossible, nor altogether difficult, to state and explain in some measure what Christ is not. But it is impossible, not indeed to state, for that the Bible does to our hand, but to explain and illustrate what Christ is in his eternal subsistence, as begotten of the Father. The Nicene Creed expresses the matter well, and in exact agreement with this Creed:—"God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,

begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father."

To the term "begotten" it is very natural, I will admit, to apply and confine the idea of something produced from another, which other must have had priority of existence, and so it is in all cases but this one, the eternal generation of the Son. Does any one wish to stop me here, and to ask, How can there be eternal generation, when generation means production from, and, therefore, that which is produced must have come after that which produced? Before you require of me to explain this, let me ask a question. How could Jehovah have had no beginning? You will reply, and justly, He must necessarily have had no beginning. But can you conceive of this, so as to have any comprehension of it yourself, and so as to bring it to the level of the comprehension of a fellow-creature by any explanation you can give of it? You know you cannot. "Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out."

(Job xxxvi. 26.—Elihu.) If there be the possibility of an eternal existence, which we are taught to call God, there is also the possibility of an eternal emanation from the substance of that Godhead, which we are taught to call the Son; and who, bearing that title, must, in natural propriety of language, be said to be generated of the Father. For if He be a Son, He must have a Father; and if He be eternal, as we have proved Him from Scripture to be, He must be the eternal Son of the eternal Father. Now I beg you to regard all I am now saying as a statement of a fact taken directly from the revelation of God, and not as any attempt to make it one jot more easy to be apprehended than it was before. This has made no part of my aim. Had my vain and foolish heart meditated and planned any such design, how should I have stood reproved by the appalling and silencing words of the great and glorious Jehovah to his servant Job: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast under-

standing. . . . Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?" (Job xxxviii. 2—21.) No: "Such knowledge is too wonderful; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Ps. cxxxix. 6.)

But what I cannot attain unto by my understanding, I can receive by faith as a declared truth of God's Word. To that proceed we.

In John i. 18, we have these words:—"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." This, and some other passages in which the expression "begotten" is used, do not relate to the circumstance of the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary, though some of them do. There is an expression added in this passage which directs us to take a distinct view of it, and which points to Christ's eternal Sonship. It is this: "Which is in the bosom of the Father." Now, in order to arrive at the proper force and meaning of this, we will bring another to illustrate it. John iii. 13: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but

He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." In each of these you will perceive Christ, while on earth, is spoken of at the same time, in the first passage as being in the bosom of the Father, and, in the second, as being in heaven. But how in the bosom of the Father? Even by that eternal and indissoluble union of the Divine substance of which I have before spoken ; so that here we have the substance not divided, neither the persons confounded. And again, how in heaven? Even by the necessity, as being God, of his Divine presence being everywhere and at the same time. So that, whilst all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily, it did not so dwell in Him as if the Godhead were contracted and confined within bounds,—just as our souls are in their earthly houses,—but was pervading earth and heaven, and the heaven of heavens.

In Proverbs viii. there is a most remarkable passage, which has always been considered as relating to the eternal Word, or Son of God : " The Lord possessed me in the

beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (Vers. 22, 23.) And it then proceeds: "Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before Him." (Ver. 30.) Now, compare with this what Agur (Prov. xxx. 4) says: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?"

Both these passages were given long before the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and, therefore, must be received as speaking of a Sonship antecedent to his being born of Mary.

I would next call your attention to the manner in which Christ speaks of Himself, which, upon a variety of occasions, is in such a way as, whilst it declares his Sonship, declares it in terms which require us to

receive the doctrine of that Sonship as everlasting. At John xvii. 8, He says: "I came out from thee." John xvi. 28: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." And that there must be a peculiar meaning belonging to these and similar passages is evident from other words of our Lord, as, for instance, when he says (Luke x. 22): "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son." And where He declares that his knowledge of the Father corresponds with the Father's knowledge of Him. (John x. 15.) But how could all this be, except according to those truths which are put forth in this Creed? And there is an eternal subsistence with the Father by an eternal generation from Him; so that, while in person He is distinct, as Son, from the Father, in substance He is one with the Father, as God.

There is one other place in Scripture (Heb. i. 3) which I must bring forward,

where the terms applied to Christ confirm what I have been saying respecting his Sonship from the Father, yet his co-equality and co-eternity with the Father: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." Christ is here called the "brightness" of the Father's glory; the original means, a shining forth from or out of the Father's glory; but the glory is equal, the majesty co-eternal. It must be so. The Father's glory is the Son's glory, and the Son's the Father's. Again, He is called the express image of his Person, which, in the original, conveys, I think, a stronger meaning,—the character of his substance. Whichever interpretation be adopted, one thing is clear,—that no such description could be applied to one less than God, and that, from the way in which it is expressed, it as clearly denotes that it is one coming forth from God, or begotten of God, who in all things resembles God, is equal with God, &c.

There is only one remark more to be made in regard to the Second Person in the

Trinity,—the Lord Jesus Christ,—and that is what the Creed says of the Son, that He is of the Father alone, and this will require only a few words. Its intention is to show what Scripture uniformly asserts, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God ; that He was the only one to whom that distinction belonged ; and that it was solely from God the Father his Sonship was derived.

In proceeding with the Creed, we are now brought to consider what it says with regard to the Holy Ghost. And its words are : “The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son : neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.”

I have in my former lecture shown that the Holy Ghost is God ; and as I affirmed that Christ, though God, was not the Father, so now I have to maintain that the Holy Ghost, though God, is neither the Father nor the Son, but a distinct Person proceeding from both. You will observe, I use the term “proceeding,”—the term which always has been used in speaking of the Holy Ghost,—who, as He is nowhere in Scripture called a

Son, nor is there anywhere the least intimation given of his being to be so regarded, is said to proceed.

As it was said of the Son, that He was not made, so it is said of the Holy Ghost in like manner, and for the same reasons. That which is eternal cannot be made, nor created. The Holy Ghost is eternal, as is proved (Heb. ix. 14), wherein the three Persons of the Trinity are brought together in one sentence, and in which it is taught that Christ, "through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." A being eternal, and a being created, being one and the same being, is a contradiction in terms; for eternal implies no beginning, creation proclaims a beginning.

But let us look at some things said of the Holy Spirit, which speak of Him so as to evidence that He is neither made nor created. In Romans viii. 26, 27, the apostle writes: "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He

maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." And that same Spirit, on the other hand, is declared (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11) "to search all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

Here is a mutual and intimate and perfect knowledge declared to be subsisting between the Father and the Holy Spirit. And how shall, or can, or ought we understand this but as announcing the very truth which we are setting ourselves to prove,—that the Spirit is one with God.

We come now to speak of the Holy Ghost being of the Father and the Son,—that is, proceeding from them. He does not proceed from the Father alone, independent of the Son; nor from the Son alone, independent of the Father; but He proceedeth from them both. This is confirmed by our Lord's own words: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from

the Father, He shall testify of me." (John xv. 26.) And again: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name." (John xiv. 26.) No inferiority, I would here just remark, is to be inferred from its being said that the Holy Spirit is sent, any more than inferiority in Christ is to be inferred from its being also said that He was sent. (Jesus was said to be led of the Spirit into the wilderness.)

But the same Holy Spirit, who is said to proceed from the Father, is also termed the Spirit of Christ. As when the apostle says: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (1 Pet. i. 11.) And at Gal. iv. 4, 5: "God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." So John the Baptist, speaking first of his own inferior ministration, and then adverting to Christ, says: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." So that we see the Holy Ghost is sometimes spoken of as of the Father, sometimes as of the Son, and sometimes as of the Father and Son together; Scripture thus bearing out com-

pletely the statement of the Creed, that the Holy Ghost is "not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding."

And it then adds, as a summary, in the way of caution against a misinterpretation of its statements: "So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal, so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped."

I will now draw this part of my subject to a close this evening by making a few very short observations, which it would not have been so convenient to me to introduce into the body of my address.

1. Let any one look at what is said of Christ in regard to his power, his knowledge of all things, his offices of Redeemer and Mediator, his being hereafter to sit in judgment upon all mankind, his declaration of his being Lord of the Sabbath; his calling Him-

self the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ; its being said of Him that, being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and many other declarations to a similar effect ;—I say, let any one look at these things, and then dispassionately and honestly ask himself whether he can allow, if words have any definite meaning, less than a Divine nature to Him who is termed the Lord from heaven ?

I feel quite assured of this, that we must erase from our Bibles very large and very numerous passages, all bearing upon the Divine nature of Christ, and affording substantial proofs of it, before we can with common honesty deny his Godhead. And the same may be said in regard to the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, to whom such powers and attributes are ascribed in the Word of God as can only belong to a Divine nature.

And this unworthy measure has been resorted to by the opponents of the doctrine of the Trinity, of late years, who, aware that particular passages remained, and were allowed to be part and parcel of God's

revealed Word, have taken the shortest step to get rid at once of the difficulties which stood in the way of their own views and interpretations. Like the hero of Macedon, who, when he had made many ineffectual attempts to untie the knot of Gordius, in a fit of vexation drew his sword and cut it. So these men, unable to explain away by any sophistry of argument, and equally unable to maintain their views if they allowed the pure, unadulterated, unmutilated Word of God to be referred to as a whole, to be the test of truth, have cut the matter short, and have taken upon them to do what I should tremble to do, so long as I find at the end of my Bible such awful words as these :—"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." For, though these words were given in a more immediate reference to the Revelation, yet they apply in full force to the whole Book of God.

2. I next remark, that what the Word of God declares cannot be matter of indifference and of no importance whether we receive it or not. A poet of celebrity once wrote,—

“For modes of faith let angry zealots fight;
His can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”

A prettily turned off sentiment will ensnare and ensure the admiration of many, when a sober mind and a hallowed judgment,—a judgment formed upon the basis of eternal truth,—will at once detect the fallacy and escape the fraud attempted to be practised on the understanding.

Beloved, let your rule always be this:—
“To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them.” “The meek will He guide in judgment.” Is any one at any time harassed by the temptation to wish to understand more, having all the while a measure of faith that it must be true, for God hath said it? Let him pray, with the father mentioned in the Gospel: “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

But oh ! let all beware of a captious, cavilling, and proud reasoning spirit.

We know from St. Paul (1 Cor. i. 18) that the preaching of the cross was to them who perish foolishness, whilst to them, on the other hand, who are saved, it is the power of God. And he tells us God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Use your reason, exercise your understanding, but let it be in comparing spiritual things with spiritual ; let both be guided and restrained by the unerring words of everlasting truth.

LECTURE IV.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."—1 Tim. iii. 9.

IN the three former Lectures our attention has been directed to the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, and a Unity in Trinity; in the proof of which my plan was, in the first place, to show that there is and can be but one God. This was done by pointing out from the necessity of the case that it must be so, and then by supporting from scriptural testimony the arguments brought forward. I then proceeded to state that, though there be but one God, nevertheless, in that Unity of Godhead, there were comprehended three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-eternal and co-equal. And this was sustained by a variety of selected passages from Scripture, showing

that there were three Persons continually spoken of, sometimes conjointly, but most frequently separately, yet invariably in such a way and in such terms as most clearly denoted a real Divine nature in each.

This evening we shall have a subject to contemplate of a no less mysterious and wonderful character than the former—the incarnation of one of the persons of the Trinity, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The part of the Creed which treats of this begins with the paragraph, “Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

With this I shall commence my observations. The word “incarnation” means the assuming or taking of human flesh. This our blessed Lord did. Now, it has fared with this doctrine as it has with the doctrine of his Divine nature. It has been opposed and denied. In a very early age of the Church, even in the time of St. John, there arose a singular heresy. Some teachers started up, who were sound in their views

of the nature of Christ, and admitted and proclaimed Him to be God. The contrary sentiment to this did not, indeed, find its way among the body of Christians till long after. But, whilst holding this certain and most important truth, they united with it a most pernicious and unscriptural error. They asserted that Jesus Christ, God the Saviour, in appearing upon earth in the form and semblance of a man, did so only in appearance,—that He was not a bodily reality, only a spiritual subsistence.

Such a doctrine as this struck at the very root or nature and intent of the whole Christian dispensation, and tended effectually to put out of sight one of its most distinguishing and important features. The atonement is, in fact, lost by it, and all its blessed consequences. For though the atonement has its efficacy from having been made by one capable of making it, even by Jesus Christ, and his sufficiency for it consisted in his being Divine, yet this atonement was not made by Christ simply and solely as God, as may be easily understood by one consideration—God cannot

suffer. Hence we find St. Paul (Heb. ii. 9) affirming that "Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." For as in his Divine nature he could not die, and yet without death, that being the penalty to be paid, there could be no satisfaction made for the law broken by man, He therefore assumed, took unto himself human flesh, which was capable of death.

The importance, therefore, of the doctrine of Christ's real incarnation, among many other considerations, may be clearly seen in the necessity of it for the accomplishment of man's salvation. For as it was a human nature which sinned, and, of course, as human nature had to answer for that sin, therefore was a human nature, with all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in it in order to constitute the infinite price required for satisfaction to the law, taken by Christ. And it is to this the apostle (Heb. x. 5) refers when he writes of Christ, "A body hast thou prepared me." When the disciples, after the resurrection of Jesus, were alarmed by his sudden appearance, thinking they beheld a spirit, He said

to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke xxiv. 39.) It may at once, then, be seen how important it is that clear scriptural views should be taken of this subject. That these are not points of indifference, which we may regard or disregard according to fancy, we are admonished and taught by a passage in 1 John iv. 2, 3:—"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." And again, in his Second Epistle, ver. 7, of a very solemn character, his words are these:—"Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Vers. 9, 10:—"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He

that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." And what is this doctrine on which the apostle lays so much stress, and the rejectors of which he enjoins to be dealt with by something strongly resembling a rule of excommunication, if it be not actually to be interpreted as such? It is even this—that Christ is to be received in his twofold but united character as God and man; that neither are to be left out in our reception of Him. That the apostle intended this is manifest from the third verse of this same Epistle, wherein he says, "Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father."

Now, if we compare these two together, we shall see that he commences by reference to Christ's original dignity, and then warns them against an error beginning to prevail through certain false teachers in the Church. And the passage is peculiarly weighty, if

we bear in mind the very strong, clear, and decided manner in which this apostle asserts the Godhead of Christ in his Gospel (John i. 1), and the equally clear manner in which he speaks of his humanity (ver. 14):—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." When, therefore, the Creed asserts that it is necessary to everlasting salvation that we also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it only asserts that which is in perfect unison with the declarations of Scripture; and thence it is, we have to repeat, we can alone derive the truths of God—truths, in the reception of which we are everlastingly concerned.

Let us see, then, a little more at large what Scripture says in reference to Christ becoming man. And for this purpose we will first inquire whether in the Old Testament anything is predicted concerning Him which bears upon this point and sustains it.

The very opening of the sacred volume (Gen. iii. 15) has a direct allusion to it,

wherein God, addressing the serpent, says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This prophecy standing by itself would, doubtless, be of difficult interpretation, and, did no other part of Scripture serve as a comment to explain its meaning, we should be at an utter loss to arrive at it. But Scripture furnishes abundant explanation of it. As we advance in the march of time, we find, after the flood, God saying to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxii. 18.) The question arises, how were they to be blessed ? Certainly not by the Jews, his descendants, as Jews simply ; for, regarded solely as a people, they brought no blessings to the world at all. No ; the promised blessing was indeed to come to the world from among his descendants, but it was to come from only one of his many descendants. So argues and proves St. Paul (Gal. iii. 16) :—" Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of

many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Words cannot be plainer to denote that Christ was the promised seed of the woman—in other words, that He, the promised Saviour of the world, was to be born into the world a perfect human being. Again, look at that remarkable prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. ix. 6), "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ;" and who that child—who that son is, is made abundantly clear and certain by the extraordinary appellations bestowed upon Him in the same verse, and by what is said in the following verse:—"And the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever."

Let us turn now from prophecy, and examine what is said of Christ by the inspired writers of the New Testament.

St. Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 16): —“Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh.” The Apostle at once proclaims it a mystery, a great mystery; but he knew it to be a truth—he knew it to be the grand foundation-stone of the whole dispensation of mercy to man; he knew that the whole scheme of salvation was comprehended in this mysterious but glorious truth. And hence we find it again and again brought forward by him in his Epistles. Some of these I will lay before you. At Romans i. 3 he says that the Gospel of God was “concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” And here let us mark the peculiarity of the expression, which implies more than at first strikes the mind of many. By making the distinction, “according to the flesh,” he at once asserts the real manhood of Christ, but in such a way, at the same time, as to point out something unusual—something never occurring before; and this was, that though as to birth He was very man in all respects, yet He had a higher

original than what He derived from David according to the flesh. You will remember how our Lord on one occasion, when reasoning with the cavilling Jews, adverted to this very subject. He had asked them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" And upon their replying, "The Son of David," Jesus proposed another question to them:—"How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matt. xxii. 41—45.) This completely embarrassed his enemies, the Pharisees; and I have often thought, amid the very numerous testimonies which the Scriptures give relative to the person of Christ, there is not one more convincing and incapable of being replied to than this question of our Lord's. It at once combines, by necessary implication, the real dignity of Christ, before his appearance on earth, with his state of humiliation, as partaking of man's nature by his descent according to the flesh in a direct line from David.

At Galatians iv. 4, the Apostle says:—
“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” The assumption of human nature is here so expressed as to answer a twofold object, both to show that the Son of God became incarnate, and also to intimate that the purpose for which He became so was to meet and fulfil the demands of the law as a man. If it be asked, Why is the expression used “made of a woman”? the answer is, because Christ, though incarnate, was not conceived according to the natural and universal law of generation. He had no earthly father, but was born of a pure virgin. In Jeremiah xxxi. 22 it is said, in reference to this which was in after ages to take place:—“The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.” When the Virgin was told by the Angel Gabriel that she should conceive in her womb and bring forth a son, filled with astonishment at such an announcement, she said, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” The angel informs her,—“The

Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Here, again, the Creed is seen to speak most accurately and scripturally. It maintains the real humanity of the Saviour. But it does not lose sight of what it set out with propounding—that that Saviour is Divine. It requires the believing rightly the incarnation of Christ. There are those who admit Him to be man ; but they allow Him to be no more than any ordinary man ; thus depriving Him of every qualification that is requisite to constitute Him a Saviour. For if Jesus were nothing but man, and born after the common course of nature, and had nothing in himself beyond what we all have in common, then it was impossible for Him to be and do what He undertook to be and do ; He could not be a Redeemer, for He would have needed redemption himself ; He could not save, for He would have stood in need of salvation, as partaking of our common sinfulness and guilt. Therefore the Creed states

well, "The right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God is God and man: God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

Now, according to our plan of proving every point by Scripture, let us apply to God's Word, and see whether these things are anywhere in it so stated. I invite your consideration to Micah v. 2: "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And we are not left to surmise how this is to be, but the very next verse informs us: "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." You cannot fail to perceive that this Ruler is spoken of in terms which can only apply, upon the principles laid down from Scripture

in a former lecture, to a Divine personage. He must be God, for eternity is ascribed to Him. And yet this Ruler, thus gloriously spoken of, it is said, shall come forth out of Bethlehem to another. Who, then, is that other? Even the Eternal Father, speaking by the prophet. And how is this Ruler to come? Born of a woman. You see, then, before the advent of Christ, all these circumstances were prophetically revealed concerning Him. And you will be satisfied that the whole solely relates to Christ when you recollect it is quoted (Matt. ii. 6) in very nearly the words of the prophet; and when you reflect that the Jews knew well that their promised Messiah was to come out of the town of Bethlehem, and to be of the seed of David. (John vii. 42.)

And as spake the prophet under the Old Testament dispensation, so, under the New, the apostles invariably speak in agreement with them. At Romans ix. 5, St. Paul, enumerating the privileges belonging to his countrymen, among other things mentions, that of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ

came; and then immediately adds, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever." Thus, in one sentence, uniting in his statement the two natures of Christ, the human and Divine. A similar combination of statement occurs, Phil. ii. 6—8: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (1 Cor. xv. 47: "The second man is the Lord from heaven.")

That there was not the least difference between the human nature of Christ and our own is proved from Hebrews ii. 14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same;" and for a reason which bears upon what I said in a former part of this lecture on the subject of our salvation, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death,

that is, the devil." And at the seventeenth verse: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

And as Christ had the flesh of our common nature, but without any taint of sin, so had He a reasonable soul. There have been those, and there are some still, who, agreeing in the main with the doctrines set forth in this Creed, have felt a difficulty here, from supposing that the Divine nature in Christ constituted his soul. This is an error. He had a soul the same as we have. It was that soul which felt trouble, grief, wonder,—in short, which experienced all the emotions to which our souls are subject. It was that reasonable soul which increased in wisdom. It was that soul which received the Spirit bestowed upon Him by his Father without measure. It was that soul on which Satan practised, &c. It was of that soul He spake when, expiring on the cross, He said,

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke xxiii. 46.) Had not this been the case, Christ would not in all things have been made like unto his brethren; He could not have been such an High Priest as could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He could not have been tempted in all things like as we are. For, had the Divine nature been to Him what our soul is to us, that Divine nature must necessarily have been incapable of being tried, tempted, or troubled, the Godhead being inaccessible to everything of the kind.

And here, let me just remark, what consolation is derived to the believer from this consideration, that his Saviour was such as he is in all respects, in body, to endure hunger, &c., in soul, to be affected by sorrow, &c., with only this difference,—the believer sinful, the Saviour sinless, and, therefore, able to be a propitiation for the sinful believer.

It is, perhaps, only necessary to offer one more observation relative to the soul of Christ, and that for the purpose solely of

obviating an objection that might be raised as to the purity of his soul. By the immaculate conception of Him in the womb of the Virgin Mary, his body was entirely free from the whole law of sin which worketh in our members. He was without spot. And so it was with his soul, which was communicated to Him; not as we derive our souls, by natural generation from our fathers, but by the same power of the Highest overshadowing his mother, which produced his body. You will find no difficulty in admitting this, if you call to mind the creation of Adam, and remember it is said of him, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul." When that soul was infused into Adam it was sinless. When he fell by transgression, both body and soul became corrupt and sinful. A soul, therefore, derived to Christ from his mother would have been subjected to the taint of sin from her. This will suffice for this point.

The Creed goes on to say that Christ was "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching

his manhood." Of the equality of Christ with the Father in the Godhead, I need say no more than what I have already advanced and proved on a former occasion. It remains only to speak of his inferiority to the Father. This inferiority consists in his voluntary humiliation by condescending to take our infirm nature upon Him. The glory of the Godhead was veiled by the assuming of the human nature into it in the person of Christ. And besides this, there was an actual subjection in the man Christ Jesus to his Heavenly Father, as we find Christ Himself declaring repeatedly, and his apostles with equal frequency asserting. The Godhead of the Son was not, and could not be inferior to the Godhead of the Father, for there cannot be such a thing as a superior and inferior Godhead. But the man Christ Jesus, "in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead," might be and was inferior to the Father, who had no association of flesh with Himself.

Christ Himself said, "My Father is greater than I." (John xiv. 28.) And as we cannot suppose Him capable of contradicting any-

thing at one time that He had said at another, when we find Him at one time claiming equality with the Father, and then subsequently asserting a superiority in the Father over Him, we must reconcile the two statements by taking that view of the subject which the Creed does; and such a mode of reconciling what might at first appear to have a semblance of contradiction, is in perfect agreement with Scripture.

This inferiority of Christ, so always to be explained, is brought before us by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 3: "The head of Christ is God." And, 1 Cor. iii. 23: "Christ is God's." And there is a day coming, "when, all things having been subdued unto the Son," his mediatorial reign and kingdom having been completed, "the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 28.)

Such is the inferiority of which the Creed speaks. And I would here remark, the uncompromising and simple fidelity of the Creed is much to be admired and esteemed,

in that, whilst endeavouring to set forth and maintain the essential Godhead of Christ, it shrinks not from saying things which to some might appear subversive of all that had previously been said in support of Christ's Divine nature. It proves that the author of it was content to follow Scripture, and desirous only to exhibit its truths, leaving it to an humble faith to receive them.

But as there is always a liability even from truth itself to deduce error (such is the infirmity of our understandings), unless it be guarded on every side, the Creed wisely gives a caution against entertaining the supposition, from the premises laid down respecting the two natures in Christ, that there were two Persons, by saying, "Yet He is not two, but one Christ;" and one Christ, not by the Godhead being changed into flesh, which would be a most unworthy notion, contradictory of what is said of God, that "He is Spirit," but by taking the manhood into God. The statement of this union, incomprehensible as it is, is scriptural in its very terms: (*e.g.*), "He took upon Him the

form of a servant,"—not "was changed into a servant." Again, one Christ; not by confusion of substance. No; the substance of the Divine nature was not blended, mixed up, if I may so speak, with the substance of the human nature, as to be one and the same substance. That could not be, for the former is spiritual, imperishable, and eternal; the latter is material, decaying, and corruptible: so that, from this absolute difference in quality and essence, they must in substance be distinct, each having its own property and peculiarity. But whilst this is the case with regard to the substance of each, that they must not be confounded, there is "a unity of person." And this is well and simply illustrated by what immediately follows: "For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." The soul and the flesh are two entirely distinct things; they have nothing in common between them in any of their properties.

The soul;—(I am not going to undertake an explanation of what the soul is, that would be a vain and fruitless attempt);—the soul,

I say, is immaterial; it cannot be touched, it hath not flesh and bones; it has nothing of the character of matter, yet it dwells in the body while life remains, and that body is only matter. When the soul has departed out of the body, which it does at death, the corruption of the body ensues, and the man ceases to be in his compound state of body and soul. The immaterial soul in the material body made that which is termed man. So the Divine nature in the human constituted Him who is called Christ, or, as the Creed words it, God and man is one Christ.

The divinity was not parted with by the Son condescending to become one of, and like ourselves; neither, by his so condescending, did he impart a Divine nature to the body, but the Divine nature dwelt in that body. As it is said, "In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead," each nature was distinct and kept its place; so that the one Christ was perfect God, and perfect man.

With this portion of the Creed I close my address to you this evening, by offering only a short practical remark or two.

The Creed says we are not merely to believe, but to confess these truths.

It is not enough that any one in his own breast tacitly admits that these things must be so (incomprehensible as they are), because they are evidently contained in Scripture ; more is required,—we must acknowledge openly our belief of them. And why must we? Does any one think it sufficient that in himself he has a persuasion, a conviction, that these things are so? And will he say, If I believe, can anything more be demanded of me? Is it not this faith you are seeking to produce and establish in my mind? And if that be effected, what need of anything else? To believe is much, very much; but it is not all. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,” the apostle says; but he adds, “with the tongue confession is made unto salvation.”

Religion does not consist in a passive meditation upon truths, nor in a selfish reception of them. Whatever revelation brings before us, it has these objects in view;—the glorification of God by a public and open and

honest and heartfelt declaration of our full belief in his Word ; the spiritual good of others, by our coming boldly forward with an avowal of our faith ; that, as members one of another in Christ's mystical body, his Church, we may encourage, support, and strengthen one another's minds in the faith. St. Paul, you know (Rom. i. 11, 12), says : " I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." And here I would take occasion to remark on the advantage of creeds, to the introduction of which into public worship and service some have entertained objections. They consist of public " declarations of those things which are most surely believed among us." (Luke i. 1.) By our reciting of them, we refresh and invigorate our hearts with the truths they contain ; we remind ourselves whom we are worshipping, the nature of the blessings we are to expect and look for with confidence, and thus obtain renewed life and zeal for worship,

as comprehending prayer, praise, thanksgiving ; and all founded on faith and animated by hope ; hope in the Father, whose love gave his Son ; hope in the Son, whose grace took up our ruined case ; hope in the Eternal Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, whose light dispels darkness from the soul, and who, taking of the things of Christ, sheweth them unto us and leadeth us into all truth. Therefore, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Eternal Persons in one Eternal Godhead, as it is by all in heaven, so by all on earth, be ascribed might, majesty, dominion, and power, for ever and ever.

LECTURE V.

“Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”—1 Tim. iii. 9.

THE closing portion of the Creed, which is to occupy our attention this evening, may be conveniently arranged under three general divisions:—

1st. What Christ hath done in our behalf on earth.

2dly. What He is still doing for us in heaven.

3dly. What He will do at some future day.

(a.) Under our first division we have to consider the assertion of the Creed that He suffered for our salvation. To need salvation must, of course, imply that the beings who need it are in a lost and perilous condition;

and when that salvation is effected by another, it equally implies that it was out of their power or means to save themselves. This was, and is, precisely the state and case of the whole race of mankind. "In Adam all are dead." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) And "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. v. 18.) "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." (Gal. iii. 22.) And "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) Man is, therefore, by nature a lost creature; and he is helpless as well as lost; he is "without strength." (Rom. v. 6.)

From this condition of man arises the necessity of a Saviour. He cannot save himself; therefore if he be to be saved, his salvation must be effected by another, and that other must be one in all respects capable of executing the office of a Saviour. There must be a competency in Him to meet all that may be required to accomplish the salvation of man. There must be nothing in

himself that He has to answer for,—no sin,—there must be no weakness,—He must be equal to what He undertakes. Now, every requisite is found combined in Christ. “He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” “In Him was no sin.” It is said of Christ in prophecy, “He is mighty to save.” “The Lord hath laid help upon one that is mighty.” And the apostle,—“He is able to save to the uttermost.” Christ, then, is sufficient for the whole work of salvation. There is no demand against Him personally excepting that which He voluntarily undertook to answer for others ; there is nothing in the work for which He is not infinitely equal —“He is the mighty God.” (Isa. ix. 6.)

But our salvation was to be effected in a way unheard of, and inconceivable by the natural apprehension of human reason. He that was to save us was to do this by his own personal sufferings. “Christ suffered for our salvation.”

This act of Christ was purposed in the everlasting counsels of the blessed Trinity. It was not a contingent act, thought of and

planned for the first time when man fell by transgression. It was an eternal purpose. So affirms St. Paul (Eph. iii. 10, 11):—"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This purpose was to redeem and save his people, and that by suffering for them.

This was predicted of Him. In Isaiah liii. 5 we have these things said:—"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with his stripes we are healed." And again, ver. 10:—"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Ver. 12:—"He hath poured out his soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many." The Angel Gabriel informs Daniel (ix. 26)—"After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be

cut off, but not for himself." In Zechariah xiii. 7:—"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd." "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." These passages most distinctly indicate that the gracious purposes of Almighty God towards his creatures were to be accomplished by his Son Jesus, the Messiah, undergoing suffering in our behalf. I need only add to them, in confirmation, that this was the wonderful and merciful scheme planned from the beginning, that the appointment of sacrifices under the Jewish dispensation, and especially the offering up of the paschal lamb, were types of this, for Jesus is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"—"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Such are some of the evidences derived from the Old Testament relative to the promised Saviour effecting our salvation by his own personal sufferings. Now, if we find the statements of the New Testament corresponding with them,—if we learn that Jesus did suffer—that He

himself announced that He was to suffer—that He assigned the reason why He was to suffer—that his commissioned apostles affirmed the same things with Him—that they laid any stress upon the circumstance of his suffering,—if they made it an important and invariable feature of all their ministrations—if it were their grand theme, then, from the concurrent testimony of prophecy concerning it before it took place, and its actual fulfilment at the appointed time in the purposes of God, we obtain an indubitable proof that our salvation was and is solely the result of Christ suffering in our stead, and that nothing else saves us, or contributes to our salvation; for Christ's death was a penal death; by it He discharged a penalty of which we had no means of paying the smallest possible portion. "He died, the just for the unjust, that He might redeem us to God." "He trode the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Him. He looked, and there was none to help; and He wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore his own arm brought salvation." (Isa. lxiii. 3—5.) It

is of the utmost importance that this view of Christ's sufferings for our salvation be carefully maintained. He took upon Him the whole responsibility of paying that debt which man had incurred by his sin. Man did not—man could not contribute anything towards its discharge. The whole glory of our salvation belongs to Christ. We have seen it was foretold that Christ was to suffer. Did He suffer? The history of the New Testament confirms that He did. Indeed, that the man Christ Jesus suffered, whatever views have by any been taken of the purposes of his death, is indisputable. It is corroborated by heathen writers. On that point, therefore, it is not at all necessary to dwell. It stands as a recorded fact. But from that fact are deducible circumstances of a widely different and infinitely superior character than can be drawn from the death of any other being that ever existed. Let us see what Christ said on this subject. Christ said of himself:—"The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.) "I am the living bread which came down

from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John vi. 51.) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14.) He terms himself "The Good Shepherd," and says, "The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John x. 11.)

In the institution of the Sacrament nothing can be plainer than that the whole intention of it was to be a holy feast, commemorative not simply of his death, but of his love in dying for sinners. For what else could He mean when, giving the bread to his disciples, He said, "This is my body which is given for you;" and when He gave the cup, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you"? (Luke xxii. 19, 20.) That He was to die, He had previously acquainted his disciples (Matt. xvi. 21), when He said He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and

scribes, and be killed. And after his resurrection, to the disciples going to Emmaus, He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" and that it behoved Him to suffer. (Luke xxiv. 25, 46.) Thus at once affirming the fact and giving the reason.

We will now inquire what were the views which the apostles took of the death of Christ. He had given them this commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." How did they preach that Gospel? What were the doctrines they delivered? We have not accounts of the preaching of all the twelve; but, of those which have been preserved to us, we find the sufferings and death of Christ to be their continual theme; and in the Epistles of Paul it is that which calls forth all his ardour and zeal. Hence we find him writing on one occasion:—"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And again:—"We preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 23.) And when pleading his cause

before Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 22):—"I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come, that Christ should suffer." And we are not left to conjecture why Christ suffered. This same apostle informs us (1 Tim. i. 15):—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." And how He saved, he also informs us (Heb. ix. 26):—"Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And (Heb. ix. 12):—"By his own blood He entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

To a similar effect St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 24):—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." And he says (1 Pet. i. 19):—"Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And how remarkable was that which was shown to John in vision (Rev. v. 6):—"And I beheld, and, lo, in the

midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain." And (Rev. v. 9):—"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

But the sufferings of Christ in our behalf extended to his soul as well as to his body. Isaiah said He was to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." When He entered the garden of Gethsemane, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The prospect of what He had to undergo was so trying to Him that He prayed that "the cup might pass from Him;" yea, such was his agony in prayer that "his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke xxii. 44.) And on the cross, his bitter exclamation of the words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" must sufficiently testify to the intenseness of his sufferings. And why all this? Because "the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all;" because "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins;" because, had not Christ suffered, we must all have suffered

everlastingly ; had not Christ died for our sins, we must all, on account of our sins, have died the second death, in that place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched. But Jesus, by his death, hath delivered us from the wrath to come.

Is it asked, How could this be? How could the death of Christ avail to the accomplishing of so mighty and merciful ends as these? The answer to these questions bears directly upon the subject of his Divine nature, on which, in former lectures, I have been dwelling and proving from Scripture, and will tend directly to show that these doctrines of Christ's union with the Father in the eternal power and Godhead are not an indifferent mystery. It is this very circumstance of Christ being God which gives that efficacy to the atonement which He made on the cross, by which the souls of all who believe in Him are certainly saved.

No mere human being could have been answerable for the sins of a whole world—could have answered for one individual sin, so as to cause its guilt, condemnation, and

penalty to be removed and put away, for He could not have done as much for his own sins. A sinner cannot redeem a sinner; a bankrupt debtor cannot pay for another debtor—he cannot discharge his own obligations; he that is fast bound in prison, so as to be unable to go forth, cannot unfetter another from his shackles, and liberate him from his dungeon. And in these predicaments are all mankind without a single exception. “None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” (Psalm xlix. 7.) No holy angel in heaven—no, not all the holy angels in heaven combined, could redeem and save one soul, not to say the souls of all sinners. And why? Will it be alleged that, inasmuch as they are holy, their intervention in some way might have been accepted in our behalf? Now, leaving alone that it is said (Job xv. 15), “The heavens are not clear in his sight,” and that “God charged his angels with folly” (Job iv. 18), it was impossible that they (the angels) could sustain the wrath of God, which must be overwhelming and destructive

to all that is finite. They could not have endured "to become a curse for us." Sin is an infinite debt. That which is finite cannot consequently discharge it. The Lawgiver alone can take upon himself the responsibility of what the broken law demands. Christ was that Lawgiver; and He answers for us by meeting the utmost demands of the broken law. Now, see the importance of the doctrine of his Divine nature. Nothing below God could atone for sin.

Christ, being Divine, could and did. A passage (Acts xx. 28) will suffice for the proof of this. It is part of St. Paul's charge to some of his brethren: "Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Wherein it is evident that Christ alone is spoken of, and that the mention of his Divine nature is introduced to establish in the minds of his hearers the infinite price of that which was paid for their redemption.

Let me here practically remark, in those sufferings and in that death of Christ you behold the immensity of the love of God and

of your Redeemer. Let all who believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, from this view of the love of their Saviour, assure their hearts before Him in joyful hope, and be careful to meet that love. . . . Think and meditate much upon that passage, Eph. v. 25—27: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

It is next stated that He descended into hell. On this I shall not occupy your attention long. You are not to understand by the word "hell," in this place, the regions of torment where devils dwell. Neither are you to understand by it the grave in which his body was deposited. It means the place of departed spirits, that place to which the souls of men, when they have quitted their mortal tabernacles, are removed, and where they remain till that day when a reunion of their spirits with their bodies (in the instance

of true believers, glorified bodies) will take place. It is that place to which Christ referred when, on the cross, He said to the penitent thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." As Christ was in all respects made like one of us, so He was to encounter all that we have, and we are, in consequence, to derive and enjoy from Him all that grew out of what He did and suffered for us. He had a human soul as well as a human body. His human body underwent death by crucifixion; his human soul went into the place assigned for the reception of the spirits of departed saints. But neither were to remain there beyond a very limited time. In the Sixteenth Psalm this is foretold, and thus quoted and enlarged upon, Acts ii. 27—31: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. . . . Therefore David, being a prophet, and knowing what God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrec-

tion of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

The resurrection of Christ comes next. By this wonderful act, "He showed Himself to be the Son of God with power." This was the crowning act of all He did on earth. By his death He made an atonement for sin: "By death He conquered him that had the power of death, even the devil." By death He "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself." (Col. ii. 15.) But more than this was requisite to establish and confirm and prove before the earth and the whole heavens the victory He had achieved. He, therefore, rose by his own Almighty power from the grave. Had his resurrection been wanting, St. Paul argues, all would have been in vain. 1 Cor. xv. 17—20: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." This manifestation of his Divine power, by showing that He was not and could not be holden of the grave,

is the completion of the work of his saving might and the foundation of every believer's confident hope and expecting joy. It is the completion,—for, as He died for our sins, so He rose again for our justification. It is the foundation,—because, now that Christ liveth, he knows he shall live also. The resurrection of Christ is the earnest of our own resurrection.

2. I proposed to consider what Christ is still doing in heaven.

After Christ had been seen for a number of days by his disciples, and afforded them ample evidence of his having risen from the dead, He in their presence visibly ascended up into heaven, from whence he had previously descended.

Then was fulfilled that beautiful description (Ps. xxiv. 7, 8): "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

Christ made a triumphant entry into the

heavens,—an entry in which we are highly concerned; for the apostle (Heb. ix. 24) assures us that “He is now entered to appear in the presence of God for us.” He is said to be sitting on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, to denote the glory to which He is restored and raised. He had prayed, “And now, Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” That prayer was heard and answered in a way most powerfully set forth (Phil. ii. 9—11): “God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” On that throne He sitteth, “ever living to make intercession for us.” (Heb. vii. 25.) There He is continually advocating the cause of his people. There He sits, the prevailing Mediator, through whom, by the Eternal Spirit who now presides over his

Church, are dispensed unto his Church all that its necessities require, and through whom the prayers and offerings, the services and praises of the people of God, are received with favourable acceptance. Christ, ascended into the heavens, is perpetually watchful over the concerns of his people; his eye is never from them; his presence is ever with them; his power ever over them, for his promise was, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." His departure from the earth and ascension up to heaven made a necessary part of the great plan of redemption and salvation. He had said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." (John xvi. 7.)

The Comforter was the promise of the Father to his Son for the abiding benefit and encouragement of his Church. When Jesus, therefore, ascended to his glory, He claimed the promise of the Father, and "exalted by the right hand of God received it." So that, "When He ascended up on high, He led

captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. iv. 8, from Psalm lxviii.) Let every follower of Christ, then, triumph and rejoice in the knowledge and belief that he hath "a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." And, knowing this, let each hold fast his profession; and, under all trials and temptations, let no one's heart faint nor be discouraged. Let not the difficulties of the Christian warfare produce unworthy fears, but let each remember the high encouragement which Paul gives (Heb. iv. 15): "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, but without sin." And let each, in this confidence of the sympathy of his Saviour, do what the apostle next enjoins: "Come boldly to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

3. The last point proposed for consideration was what Christ will do at some future day. He will come again. Of this, assurance was given to his disciples immediately after

his ascension; for "while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i. 10, 11.) Our Lord apprised his followers in his lifetime that He should come again, and He will come, not as He first made his appearance among men, in the form of a servant, a lowly babe, and a man despised. He will come in power and great glory. "Behold," says John (Rev. i. 7), "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." What an august, what a solemn occasion will that be! and how little is it regarded by thousands who have nevertheless heard of it and profess to believe in it!

Let us briefly consider what will be the consequences of Christ's second coming.

He will raise the dead. "By man came death, by man comes also the resurrection of the dead." All will be raised without

exception. "The sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell shall give up the dead which are in them." (Rev. xx. 13.)

This will be effected at the moment of our Lord's coming ; for, as the apostle (1 Thess. iv. 16) asserts, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall arise first." The second appearance of Christ will be sudden and unexpected by the whole world. All the concerns and employments of life will be going on in their ordinary manner ; men will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage ; they will be buying and selling, and planting and building ; and, in the midst of all this, suddenly will the trumpet's voice, sounding with inconceivable power, be heard from one end of the earth to the other ; the dead shall be made to hear it in their graves, which shall be opened, and their bodies, millions of which have been sleeping there for ages, shall come forth. All this will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

And what will follow? The judgment!—that judgment about which the ungodly are now so unconcerned,—that judgment which will be followed by consequences of everlasting moment.

Beloved, we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall each of us for ourselves have to give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Let each remember he will stand before One whose eye searcheth the heart and reins,—that he will stand before One who accepteth not the persons of men,—that he will stand before One who will render to every man according to his deeds. The secrets of all hearts will be disclosed; the motives of every action will be laid open; nothing will be concealed that has been ever thought, said, or done on earth. Who can think of this, and not exclaim, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified?” Who that is wise will not bethink him, and “Prepare to meet his God?” Who that values his soul and

regards its everlasting condition will not flee to Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and in whose righteousness alone he can stand safely before his Judge and be accepted?

Oh! let it be deeply reflected on, "The wicked will be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" for Christ will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you!" There will be many pleadings in that day against this sentence, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils?" but Jesus tells us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The awful words will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee life."

But while such will be the awful doom of the wicked, they that have done good shall go into life everlasting. To them Christ will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father,

receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;” and they will “enter into the joy of their Lord.” Only let it be carefully observed, it is not simply and solely for their works’ sake that this blessedness comes upon them, only so far as these works, being wrought in faith, are evidences of a real and genuine faith ; showing that it is not dead, being alone. This is plain from Rev. xiv. 13 : “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.”

Think of that glorious, that blessed, that eternal state, to which all who believe in Christ and obey Him will be certainly and finally brought, and be up and press toward the mark, for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I have now gone through what I proposed to do at the commencement of these lectures,—given a scriptural exposition and proof of the truth of the Athanasian Creed.

May what I have been enabled to offer to your consideration obtain a blessing from the Father of lights, to the establishment of your hearts and minds in the great truth of the Gospel! I have brought Scripture largely before you; and of this I feel persuaded, whoever receives the truths contained in those Scriptures cannot well find difficulty in receiving the statements in the Athanasian Creed, since they are in agreement. Is any one still disposed to question the right of any one to pronounce sentence,—as the Creed does twice, once at the beginning, and again at the close,—positively upon a man's state? Is it still thought uncharitable so to do? I will only reply, the Creed says no more than the Bible says; if it said less, it ought to be burnt as delivering untruths, and forbearing to declare the whole counsel of God.

As to its being uncharitable, if its statements be true it is the very reverse of uncharitable. If it state what the true faith is whereby we are to be saved, it does that which truth, fidelity, and a regard for men's everlasting welfare demand. If it point out

the danger of unbelief, and warn us openly of it, it is merciful.

Let me, in closing this subject, press two things upon you :—

Be much in the study of the Scriptures ; read them daily, without fail ; and, as you read them, regard God as speaking to you by them ; so will you read them with that reverence which it becomes us all to do. Stagger not at the Word in a spirit of unbelief, but receive it with meekness ; the meek God guideth in judgment.

Be much in prayer,—and never read any portion of God's Word without prayer. Does a difficult passage occur ?—Pray for Divine light and teaching. Do mysteries meet you ? Meet the mysteries with faith, and say to yourselves, God hath said it. And pray for a humble spirit, that your reason may not exalt itself above revelation.

May the whole light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ shine into and ever dwell in all your hearts ! Amen.

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